

## Retirement Benefits Affecting Firefighters Over Age 50

### Comparison of eligibility requirements for VRS and VaLORS

#### VRS

Full retirement benefits at age 50 with at least 30 years of service.

Firefighters hired over age 20 must work beyond age 50 for full retirement benefits.

#### VaLORS

Full retirement benefits at age 50 with at least 25 years of service.

Firefighters hired up to age 25 can retire at age 50 with full benefits while those hired beyond age 25 spend fewer years beyond age 50 on the job.

### Firefighter Line of Duty Death Statistics 1999 through 2003

Firefighters over age 50 accounted for 40% of all firefighter deaths although this age group accounted for less than 17% of all firefighters.<sup>(1)</sup>

The rate of fatalities for firefighters aged 50 – 59 is two thirds higher than the average and for firefighters age 60 and over, it is almost four times the average.<sup>(1)</sup>

### Career Firefighter Line of Duty Death Statistics 2002 – 2003

Firefighters age 50 and over accounted for 16% of all career firefighters.<sup>(2)</sup>

Firefighters over age 50 accounted for 22% of all career firefighter deaths.<sup>(3)</sup>

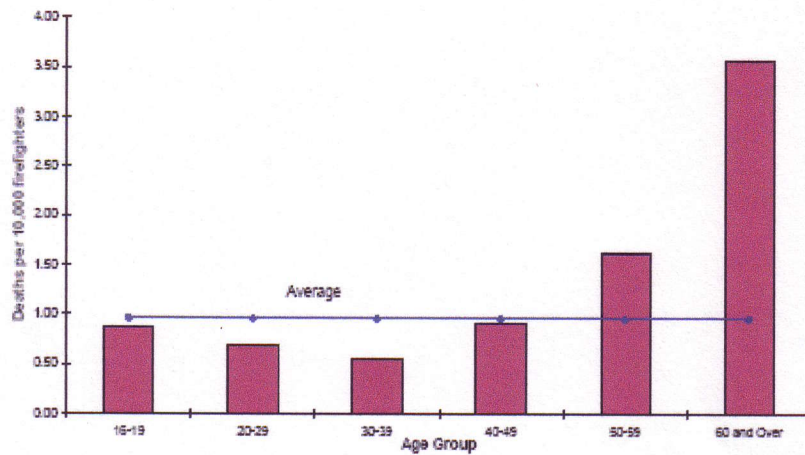
36% of deaths in this age group were attributed to heart attacks.<sup>(3)</sup>

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#### Sources:

- (1) Firefighter Fatalities in the United States – 2003, National Fire Protection Association, June 2004
- (2) U.S. Fire Department Profile Through 2002, National Fire Protection Association, October 2003
- (3) Firefighter Fatalities in the United States – 2002, National Fire Protection Association, July 2003 and Firefighter Fatalities in the United States – 2003, National Fire Protection Association, June 2004

Figure 6  
On-Duty Deaths Rates per 10,000 Firefighters – 1999-2003\*



\* excluding the 340 firefighter deaths at the World Trade Center in 2001

Figure 5  
On-Duty Firefighter Deaths  
by Age and Cause of Death -- 2003

